

Divine Mercy



From the diary of a young Polish nun, a special devotion began spreading throughout the world in the 1930s. The message is nothing new, but is a reminder of what the Church has always taught through scripture and tradition: that God is merciful and forgiving and that we, too, must show mercy and forgiveness. But in the Divine Mercy devotion, the message takes on a powerful new focus, calling people to a deeper understanding that God's love is unlimited and available to everyone — especially the greatest sinners.

The message and devotion to Jesus as The Divine Mercy is based on the writings of Saint Faustina Kowalska, an uneducated Polish nun who, in obedience to her spiritual director, wrote a diary of about 600 pages recording the revelations she received about God's mercy. Even before her death in 1938, the devotion to The Divine Mercy had begun to spread. The message of mercy is that God loves us — all of us — no matter how great our sins. He wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy. It is a message we can call to mind simply by remembering ABC:

A — Ask for His Mercy. God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world.

B — Be merciful. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to extend love and forgiveness to others just as He does to us.

C — Completely trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that the graces of His mercy are dependent upon our trust. The more we trust in Jesus, the more we will receive.

The Divine Mercy Devotion

Devotion to The Divine Mercy involves a total commitment to God as Mercy. It is a decision to trust completely in Him, to accept His mercy with thanksgiving, and to be merciful as He is merciful. The devotional practices proposed in the diary of Saint Faustina and set forth here are completely in accordance with the teachings of the Church and are firmly rooted in the Gospel message of our Merciful Savior. Properly understood and implemented, they will help us grow as genuine followers of Christ.

Merciful Heart

There are two scriptural verses that we should keep in mind as we involve ourselves in these devotional practices:

1. "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Is 29:13);
2. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7).

It's an ironic and somewhat frightening fact that many of the most religious people of Christ's time (people who were actively practicing their religion and eagerly awaiting the promised Messiah) were not able to recognize Him when He came. The Pharisees, to whom Christ was speaking in the first quotation above, were very devoted to the prayers, rules, and rituals of their religion; but over the years, these outer observances had become so important in themselves that their real meaning had been lost. The Pharisees performed all the prescribed sacrifices, said all the right prayers, fasted regularly, and talked a lot of about God, but none of it had touched their hearts. As a result, they had no relationship with God, they were not living the way He wanted them to live, and they were not prepared for the coming of Jesus. When we look at the image of the Merciful Savior, or pause for prayer at three o'clock, or pray the Chaplet — are these things drawing us closer to the real sacramental life of the Church and allowing Jesus to transform our hearts? Or have they just become religious habits? In our daily lives are we growing more and more as people of mercy? Or are we just giving "lip service" to God's mercy?

Living the Message of Mercy

The devotional practices revealed through Saint Faustina were given to us as "vessels of mercy" through which God's love can be poured out upon the world, but they are not sufficient unto themselves. It's not enough for us to hang The Divine Mercy image in our homes, pray the Chaplet every day at three o'clock, and receive Holy Communion on the first Sunday after Easter.

We also have to show mercy to our neighbors. Putting mercy into action is not an option of the Divine Mercy Devotion; it's a requirement! Our Lord strongly speaks about this to Saint

Faustina: "I demand from you deeds of mercy which are to arise out of love for me. You are to show mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere.

You must not shrink from this or try to

excuse yourself from it" (Diary, 742). Like the gospel command, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful," this demand that we show mercy to our neighbors "always and everywhere" seems impossible to fulfill. But the Lord assures us that it is possible. "When a soul approaches Me with trust," He explains, "I fill it with such an abundance of graces that it cannot contain them within itself, but radiates them to other souls" (Diary, 1074). How do we "radiate" God's mercy to others? By our actions, our words, and our prayers. "In these three degrees," he tells

Sister Faustina, "is contained the fullness of mercy" (Diary 742). We have all been called to this threefold practice of mercy, but we are not all called in the same way. We need to ask the Lord, who understands our individual personalities and situation, to help us recognize the various ways we can each show His mercy in our daily lives. By asking for the Lord's mercy, trusting in His mercy, and sincerely trying to live His mercy in our lives, we can assure that we will never hear Him say of us, "Their hearts are far from Me," but rather that wonderful promise, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Hopefully, one will continue to read and reread the information here and make the prayers, attitudes, and practices presented a real part of one's life, so that one may come to trust completely in God and live each day immersed in His merciful love — thus fulfilling the Lord's command to let your life "shine before people, so that they

will see the good things you do and praise your Father in Heaven" (Mt 5:16).

Saint Faustina

On October 5, 1938, a young religious by the name Sister Faustina (Helen Kowalska) died in a convent of the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Cracow, Poland. She came from a very poor family that had struggled hard on their little farm during the terrible years of WWI. Sister had had only three years of very simple education. Hers were the humblest of tasks in the convent, usually in the kitchen or the vegetable garden, or as a porter.

On February 22, 1931, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ appeared to this simple nun, bringing with Him a wonderful message of Mercy for all mankind. Saint Faustina tells us in her diary under this date:

"In the evening, when I was in my cell, I became aware of the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. One hand was raised in blessing, the other was

touching the garment at the breast. From the opening of the garment at the breast there came forth two large rays, one red and the other pale. In silence I gazed intently at the Lord; my soul was overwhelmed with fear, but also with great joy. After a while Jesus said to me, 'paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the inscription: Jesus, I trust in You.'"

Some time later, Our Lord again spoke to her:

"The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous; the red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays issued forth from the depths of My most tender Mercy at that time when My agonizing Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross....Fortunate is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him."

The Divine Mercy Image

The earliest element of the Devotion to the Divine Mercy revealed to St. Faustina was the Image. On February 22nd, 1931 Jesus appeared to her with rays radiating from His heart and said:

"Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and throughout the world" (Diary 47).

"I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over its enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I myself will defend it as My own glory" (Diary 48).

"I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You" (Diary 327).

"The two rays denote Blood and Water. the pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized heart was opened by a lance on the Cross. These rays shield souls from the wrath of My Father. Happy is the one who dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him" (Diary 299).

"Not in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush, lies the greatness of this image, but in My grace" (Diary 313).

“By means of this image I shall grant many graces to souls. It is to be a reminder of the demands of My mercy, because even the strongest faith is of no avail without works” (Diary 742).

In these texts the Church's doctrine on images, justification and grace are explained. First, by itself an image is merely a painting, no matter how beautiful and expressive. Yet, it can point us the mysteries of the faith and dispose us to grasp and receive what it represents, in this case the Divine Mercy. It is thus a vessel, not the source, a reminder, not the reality. The reality is the merciful fountain of grace flowing from the pierced Heart of Christ on the Cross, and flowing out visibly to represent the visible, that is the sacramental, signs of grace, Baptism and Eucharist, standing for all the sacraments of the Church. Thus, St. John in his first letter insists on the presence of the invisible with the visible, the Spirit with the water and the Blood.

The image also reminds us that salvation is not just by faith, but by works of charity also. It takes faith to see and believe in what the Image signifies, Divine Mercy poured out from Christ upon the Cross, but it takes mercy, love going beyond the strict requirements of justice, in order to draw down mercy on oneself. "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us" (Mt 6:12) and "the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you" (Mt 7:2) The Image of the pierced side of Christ pouring out blood and water reminds us that the Cross, love in action, is the price of mercy. "As I have loved you so also should you love one another." (Jn 13:34)

The Feast of Mercy

During the course of Jesus' revelations to Saint Faustina on the Divine Mercy He asked on numerous occasions that a feast day be dedicated to the Divine Mercy and that this feast be celebrated on the Sunday after Easter. The liturgical texts of that day, the 2nd Sunday of Easter, concern the institution of the Sacrament of Penance, the Tribunal of the Divine Mercy, and are thus already suited to the request of Our Lord. This Feast, which had already been granted to the nation of Poland and been celebrated within Vatican City, was granted to the Universal Church by Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the canonization of Sr. Faustina on 30 April 2000. In a decree dated 23 May 2000, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments stated that "throughout the world the Second Sunday of Easter will receive the name Divine Mercy Sunday, a perennial invitation to the Christian world to face, with confidence in divine benevolence, the difficulties and trials that mankind will experience in the years to come." These papal acts represent the highest endorsement that the Church can give to a private revelation, an act of papal infallibility proclaiming the certain sanctity of the mystic, and the granting of a universal feast, as requested by Our Lord to St. Faustina.

Concerning the Feast of Mercy Jesus said:

“Whoever approaches the Fountain of Life on this day will be granted complete forgiveness of sins and punishment” (Diary 300).

“I want the image solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, and I want it to be venerated publicly so that every soul may know about it” (Diary 341).

“This Feast emerged from the very depths of My mercy, and it is confirmed in the vast depths of my tender mercies” (Diary 420).

“On one occasion, I heard these words: My daughter, tell the whole world about My Inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which grace flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. Everything that exists has come forth from the very depths of My most tender mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will I contemplate My love and mercy throughout eternity. The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy” (Diary 699).

“Yes, the first Sunday after Easter is the Feast of Mercy, but there must also be deeds of mercy, which are to arise out of love for Me. You are to show mercy to our neighbors always and everywhere. You must not shrink from this or try to absolve yourself from it” (Diary 742).

“I want to grant complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My mercy” (Diary 1109).

As you can see the Lord's desire for the Feast includes the solemn, public veneration of the Image of Divine Mercy by the Church, as well as personal acts of veneration and mercy. The great promise for the individual soul is that a devotional act of sacramental penance and Communion will obtain for that soul the plenitude of the divine mercy on the Feast.

The Cardinal of Krakow, Cardinal Macharski, whose diocese is the center of the spread of the devotion and the sponsor of the Cause of Sr. Faustina, has written that we should use Lent as preparation for the Feast and confess even before Holy Week! So, it is clear that the confessional requirement does not have to be met on the Feast itself. That would be an impossible burden for the clergy if it did. The Communion requirement is easily met that day, however, since it is a day of obligation, being Sunday. We would only need confession again, if received earlier in Lenten or Easter Season, if we were in the state of mortal sin on the Feast.

The Indulgence

On 29 June 2002, the Apostolic Penitentiary of the Holy See promulgated a decree creating new indulgences that may be gained by the faithful in connection with the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday if in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, they take part in the prayers and devotions held in honour of Divine Mercy; or, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, they recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. "Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!"). This decree grants a plenary indulgence if they fulfill all these conditions, and a partial indulgence to those who incompletely fulfill the conditions.

For those unable to do this or for the seriously ill, if totally detesting any sin, and having the intention of fulfilling as soon as possible the three usual conditions of confession, communion and prayers for the Holy Father, they recite the Our Father and the Creed before a devout image of Our Merciful Lord Jesus and pray a devout invocation to the Merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you), the indulgence is likewise granted. If it is impossible to do even this, the indulgence is still granted if with a spiritual intention they unite with those carrying out the prescribed practice for obtaining the Indulgence in the usual way and offer to the Merciful Lord a prayer and the sufferings of their illness and the difficulties of their lives, with the resolution to accomplish as soon as possible the three conditions prescribed to obtain the plenary indulgence.

The Divine Mercy Chaplet

The Divine Mercy Chaplet is prayed on a regular set of rosary beads.

On the crucifix is prayed the Sign of the Cross.

On the first bead may be prayed the Opening Prayers:

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life,

unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You! (Repeat this line 3 times)

On the next three beads are prayed an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Apostles Creed.

Then on the Our Father Beads before each decade say the following:
Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

On the 10 Hail Mary Beads in each decade say the following:
For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

After the last decade repeat:
Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

Then at the end pray three times:
Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world!

And one may conclude with the Closing Prayer:
Let us pray. Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless, and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us, and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments, we might not despair, nor become despondent, but with great confidence, submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy Itself. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

In 1933, God gave Sister Faustina a striking vision of His Mercy, Sister tells us:

"I saw a great light, with God the Father in the midst of it. Between this light and the earth I saw Jesus nailed to the Cross and in such a way that God, wanting to look upon the earth, had to look through Our Lord's wounds and I understood that God blessed the earth for the sake of Jesus."

Of another vision on Sept. 13, 1935, she writes:

"I saw an Angel, the executor of God's wrath... about to strike the earth...I began to beg God earnestly for the world with words which I heard interiorly. As I prayed in this way, I saw the Angel's helplessness, and he could not carry out the just punishment...."

The following day an inner voice taught her to say this prayer on ordinary rosary beads:

"First say one 'Our Father', 'Hail Mary', and 'I believe'. Then on the large beads say the following words:

'Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.'

On the smaller beads you are to say the following words:

'For the sake of His sorrowful Passion have mercy on us and on the whole world.'

In conclusion you are to say these words three times:

'Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.'"

Jesus said later to Sister Faustina:

"Say unceasingly this chaplet that I have taught you. Anyone who says it will receive great Mercy at the hour of death. Priests will recommend it to sinners as the last hope. Even the most hardened sinner, if he recites this Chaplet even once, will receive grace from My Infinite Mercy. I want the whole world to know My Infinite Mercy. I want to give unimaginable graces to those who trust in My Mercy...."

"....When they say this Chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person not as the just judge but as the Merciful Savior".

The Divine Mercy Novena

Jesus asked that the Feast of the Divine Mercy be preceded by a Novena to the Divine Mercy which would begin on Good Friday. He gave St. Faustina an intention to pray for on each day of the Novena, saving for the last day the most difficult intention of all, the lukewarm and indifferent of whom He said:

"These souls cause Me more suffering than any others; it was from such souls that My soul felt the most revulsion in the Garden of Olives. It was on their account that I said: 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass Me by.' The last hope of salvation for them is to flee to My Mercy."

In her diary, St. Faustina wrote that Jesus told her:

"On each day of the novena you will bring to My heart a different group of souls and you will immerse them in this ocean of My mercy ... On each day you will beg My Father, on the strength of My passion, for the graces for these souls."

The different souls prayed for on each day of the novena are:

Day 1 (Good Friday) - All mankind, especially sinners

Day 2 (Holy Saturday) - The souls of priests and religious

Day 3 (Easter Sunday) - All devout and faithful souls

Day 4 (Easter Monday) - Those who do not believe in Jesus and those who do not yet know Him

Day 5 (Easter Tuesday) - The souls of separated brethren

Day 6 (Easter Wednesday) - The meek and humble souls and the souls of children

Day 7 (Easter Thursday) - The souls who especially venerate and glorify Jesus' mercy

Day 8 (Easter Friday) - The souls who are detained in purgatory

Day 9 (Easter Saturday) - The souls who have become lukewarm.

During the Solemn Novena leading to Divine Mercy Sunday, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy should be offered each day for the day's intentions. The prayers below may be used before the opening and closing prayer of the chaplet on these days.

First Day

"Today bring to Me all mankind, especially all sinners, and immerse them in the ocean of My mercy. In this way you will console Me in the bitter grief into which the loss of souls plunges Me."

Most Merciful Jesus, whose very nature it is to have compassion on us and to forgive us, do not look upon our sins but upon our trust which we place in Your infinite goodness. Receive us all into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart, and never let us escape from It. We beg this of You by Your love which unites You to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon all mankind and especially upon poor sinners, all enfolded in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. For the sake of His sorrowful Passion show us Your mercy, that we may praise the omnipotence of Your mercy forever and ever. Amen.

Second Day

"Today bring to Me the Souls of Priests and Religious, and immerse them in My unfathomable mercy. It was they who gave me strength to endure My bitter Passion. Through them as through channels My mercy flows out upon mankind."

Most Merciful Jesus, from whom comes all that is good, increase Your grace in men and women consecrated to Your service, that they may perform worthy works of mercy; and that all who see them may glorify the Father of Mercy who is in heaven.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the company of chosen ones in Your vineyard -- upon the souls of priests and religious; and endow them with the strength of Your blessing. For the love of the Heart of Your Son in which they are enfolded, impart to them Your power and light, that they may be able to guide others in the way of salvation and with one voice sing praise to Your boundless mercy for ages without end. Amen.

Third Day

"Today bring to Me all Devout and Faithful Souls, and immerse them in the ocean of My mercy. These souls brought me consolation on the Way of the Cross. They were a drop of consolation in the midst of an ocean of bitterness."

Most Merciful Jesus, from the treasury of Your mercy, You impart Your graces in great abundance to each and all. Receive us into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart and never let us escape from It. We beg this grace of You by that most wondrous love for the heavenly Father with which Your Heart burns so fiercely.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon faithful souls, as upon the inheritance of Your Son. For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, grant them Your blessing and surround them with Your constant protection. Thus may they never fail in love or lose the treasure of the holy faith, but rather, with all the hosts of Angels and Saints, may they glorify Your boundless mercy for endless ages. Amen.

Fourth Day

"Today bring to Me those who do not believe in God and those who do not know Me, I was thinking also of them during My bitter Passion, and their future zeal comforted My Heart. Immerse them in the ocean of My mercy."

Most compassionate Jesus, You are the Light of the whole world. Receive into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart the souls of those who do not believe in God and of those who as yet do not know You. Let the rays of Your grace enlighten them that they, too, together with us, may extol Your

wonderful mercy; and do not let them escape from the abode which is Your Most Compassionate Heart.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the souls of those who do not believe in You, and of those who as yet do not know You, but who are enclosed in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. Draw them to the light of the Gospel. These souls do not know what great happiness it is to love You. Grant that they, too, may extol the generosity of Your mercy for endless ages. Amen.

Fifth Day

"Today bring to Me the Souls of those who have separated themselves from My Church, and immerse them in the ocean of My mercy. During My bitter Passion they tore at My Body and Heart, that is, My Church. As they return to unity with the Church My wounds heal and in this way they alleviate My Passion."

Most Merciful Jesus, Goodness Itself, You do not refuse light to those who seek it of You. Receive into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart the souls of those who have separated themselves from Your Church. Draw them by Your light into the unity of the Church, and do not let them escape from the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart; but bring it about that they, too, come to glorify the generosity of Your mercy.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the souls of those who have separated themselves from Your Son's Church, who have squandered Your blessings and misused Your graces by obstinately persisting in their errors. Do not look upon their errors, but upon the love of Your own Son and upon His bitter Passion, which He underwent for their sake, since they, too, are enclosed in His Most Compassionate Heart. Bring it about that they also may glorify Your great mercy for endless ages. Amen.

Sixth Day

"Today bring to Me the Meek and Humble Souls and the Souls of Little Children, and immerse them in My mercy. These souls most closely resemble My Heart. They strengthened Me during My bitter agony. I saw them as earthly Angels, who will keep vigil at My altars. I pour out upon them whole torrents of grace. I favor humble souls with My confidence."

Most Merciful Jesus, You yourself have said, "Learn from Me for I am meek and humble of heart." Receive into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart all meek and humble souls and the souls of little children. These souls send all heaven into ecstasy and they are the heavenly Father's favorites. They are a sweet-smelling bouquet before the throne of God; God Himself takes delight in their fragrance. These souls have a permanent abode in Your Most Compassionate Heart, O Jesus, and they unceasingly sing out a

hymn of love and mercy.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon meek souls, upon humble souls, and upon little children who are enfolded in the abode which is the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. These souls bear the closest resemblance to Your Son. Their fragrance rises from the earth and reaches Your very throne. Father of mercy and of all goodness, I beg You by the love You bear these souls and by the delight You take in them: Bless the whole world, that all souls together may sing out the praises of Your mercy for endless ages. Amen.

Seventh Day

"Today bring to Me the Souls who especially venerate and glorify My Mercy, and immerse them in My mercy. These souls sorrowed most over my Passion and entered most deeply into My spirit. They are living images of My Compassionate Heart. These souls will shine with a special brightness in the next life. Not one of them will go into the fire of hell. I shall particularly defend each one of them at the hour of death."

Most Merciful Jesus, whose Heart is Love Itself, receive into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart the souls of those who particularly extol and venerate the greatness of Your mercy. These souls are mighty with the very power of God Himself. In the midst of all afflictions and adversities they go forward, confident of Your mercy; and united to You, O Jesus, they carry all mankind on their shoulders. These souls will not be judged severely, but Your mercy will embrace them as they depart from this life.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the souls who glorify and venerate Your greatest attribute, that of Your fathomless mercy, and who are enclosed in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. These souls are a living Gospel; their hands are full of deeds of mercy, and their hearts, overflowing with joy, sing a canticle of mercy to You, O Most High! I beg You O God: show them Your mercy according to the hope and trust they have placed in You. Let there be accomplished in them the promise of Jesus, who said to them that during their life, but especially at the hour of death, the souls who will venerate this fathomless mercy of His, He, Himself, will defend as His glory. Amen.

Eighth Day

"Today bring to Me the Souls who are in the prison of Purgatory, and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy. Let the torrents of My Blood cool down their scorching flames. All these souls are greatly loved by Me. They are making retribution to My justice. It is in your power to bring them relief. Draw all the indulgences from the treasury of My Church and offer them on their behalf. Oh, if you only knew the torments they suffer, you would

continually offer for them the alms of the spirit and pay off their debt to My justice."

Most Merciful Jesus, You Yourself have said that You desire mercy; so I bring into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart the souls in Purgatory, souls who are very dear to You, and yet, who must make retribution to Your justice. May the streams of Blood and Water which gushed forth from Your Heart put out the flames of Purgatory, that there, too, the power of Your mercy may be celebrated.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the souls suffering in Purgatory, who are enfolded in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. I beg You, by the sorrowful Passion of Jesus Your Son, and by all the bitterness with which His most sacred Soul was flooded: Manifest Your mercy to the souls who are under Your just scrutiny. Look upon them in no other way but only through the Wounds of Jesus, Your dearly beloved Son; for we firmly believe that there is no limit to Your goodness and compassion. Amen.

Ninth Day

"Today bring to Me the Souls who have become Lukewarm, and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy. These souls wound My Heart most painfully. My soul suffered the most dreadful loathing in the Garden of Olives because of lukewarm souls. They were the reason I cried out: 'Father, take this cup away from Me, if it be Your will.' For them, the last hope of salvation is to run to My mercy."

Most compassionate Jesus, You are Compassion Itself. I bring lukewarm souls into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart. In this fire of Your pure love, let these tepid souls who, like corpses, filled You with such deep loathing, be once again set aflame. O Most Compassionate Jesus, exercise the omnipotence of Your mercy and draw them into the very ardor of Your love, and bestow upon them the gift of holy love, for nothing is beyond Your power.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon lukewarm souls who are nonetheless enfolded in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. Father of Mercy, I beg You by the bitter Passion of Your Son and by His three-hour agony on the Cross: Let them, too, glorify the abyss of Your mercy. Amen.

The Hour of Mercy

Just as the Image can serve as a reminder of the ocean of Divine Mercy, as well as its price, so can the daily remembrance of the Divine Mercy at the hour of Christ's death. Jesus asked Saint Faustina, and through her us, to

celebrate this Hour of Great Mercy, promising tremendous graces to those who would, both for themselves and on behalf of others.

“At three o'clock, implore My mercy, especially for sinners; and, if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in My Passion, particularly in My abandonment at the moment of agony. This is the hour of great mercy ... In this hour I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion” (Diary 1320).

“As often as you hear the clock strike the third hour immerse yourself completely in My mercy, adoring and glorifying it, invoke it's omnipotence for the whole world, and particularly for poor sinners, for at that moment mercy was opened wide for every soul. In this hour you can obtain everything for yourself and for others for the asking; it was the hour of grace for the whole world - mercy triumphed over justice.

Try your best to make the Stations of the Cross in this hour, provided that your duties permit it; and if you are not able to make the Stations of the Cross, then at least step into the chapel for a moment and adore, in the Most Blessed Sacrament. My Heart, which is full of mercy: and should you be unable to step into chapel. immerse yourself in prayer there where you happen to be, if only for a very brief instant” (Diary 1572).

The following prayer, also commonly used as the Opening Prayer for the Chaplet of Divine Mercy is often recommended for prayer at the Hour of Mercy at 3:00 PM:

You expired, O Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls and an ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us. O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You. Amen.

The Divine Mercy and the Second Coming

Why would Christ emphasize in our time a doctrine, the Divine Mercy, which has been part of the patrimony of the Faith from the beginning, as well as request new devotional and liturgical expressions of it? In His revelations to St. Faustina, Jesus answers this question, connecting it to another doctrine, also sometimes little emphasized, that of His Second Coming.

In the Gospel the Lord shows us that His first coming was in humility, as a Servant, to free the world from sin. Yet, He promises to return in glory to judge the world on love, as He makes clear in his discourses on the Kingdom in Matthew chapters 13 and 25. In between these Comings we have the end times or era of the Church, in which the Church ministers

reconciliation to the world until the great and terrible Day of the Lord, the Day of Justice. Every Catholic should be familiar with the teaching of the Church on this matter, contained in paragraphs 668 to 679 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Only in the context of public revelation as taught by the Magisterium can we situate the words of private revelation given to Sr. Faustina:

"You will prepare the world for My final coming" (*Diary* 429).

"Speak to the world about My mercy ... It is a sign for the end times. After it will come the Day of Justice. While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fountain of My mercy" (*Diary* 848).

"Tell souls about this great mercy of Mine, because the awful day, the day of My justice, is near" (*Diary* 965).

"I am prolonging the time of mercy for the sake of sinners. But woe to them if they do not recognize this time of My visitation" (*Diary* 1160).

"Before the Day of Justice, I am sending the Day of Mercy" (*Diary* 1588).

"He who refuses to pass through the door of My mercy must pass through the door of My justice" (*Diary* 1146).

In addition to these words of Our Lord Sr. Faustina gives us the Words of the Mother of Mercy, the Blessed Virgin:

"You have to speak to the world about His great mercy and prepare the world for the Second Coming of Him who will come, not as a merciful Savior, but as a just Judge. Oh how terrible is that day! Determined is the day of justice, the day of divine wrath. The angels tremble before it. Speak to souls about this great mercy while it is still the time for granting mercy" (*Diary* 635).

It is clear that, like the message of Fatima, the urgency here is the urgency of the Gospel, "repent and believe." The exact timing is the Lord's. However, it is also clear that we have reached some critical phase of the end times that began with the birth of the Church. To this fact Pope John Paul II alluded at the consecration in 1981 of the Shrine of Merciful Love in Collevallenaza, Italy, when he noted the "special task" assigned to him by God "in the present situation of man, the Church and the world." In His Encyclical on the Father he urges us "to implore God's mercy for humanity in this hour of history ... to beg for it at this difficult, critical phase of the history of the Church and of the world as we approach the end of the second millennium" (*Rich in Mercy* 15).

